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## ABSTRACT

Following a lengthy discussion of urban dropout rates, possible risk factors, and the inadequacies of the general equivalency diploma (GED) and alternative high school curricula, this study consulted GED students to determine the factors contributing to their dropping out of high school. The study also explored students' reasons for attending GED programs, their career aspirations, grade retention history, past school attitudes, self-esteem, and academic achievement levels. Data were collected via a non-evaluative survey instrument, using a sample of 200 adults enrolled in the GED program at Thornton Community College (Chicago, Illinois). Only 89 of the questionnaires were usable; 90 percent of respondents were black. The self-devised instrument contained 10 personal data items, 35 dropout factor items, and three open-ended questions on GED enrollment, aspirations, number of years since leaving school, and reasons for returning to school. Findings show that very few sampled adults had been in trouble with the law, influenced adversely by peers, involved in gangs, suspended from school, abused as children, absent, ill, disabled, afraid to go to school, or raised in a dangerous community. Data suggest that poverty and socioeconomic background were contributing factors to dropout rates. Both sexes realized they needed an education to succeed in life; many wanted to continue their education, secure employment, or advance in their jobs. A significant number desired to attend college. Recommendations for keeping youth in school are given. Included are 15 references, a bibliography of 24 items, 7 data summary tables, and the study questionnaire. (MLH)

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# ANALYSIS OF WHY GED ADULTS DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL

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## ANALYSIS OF WHY GED ADULTS DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL

Earl J. Ogletree and Vilma Ujlaki

The U. S. General Accounting Office reports that in 1985, 4.3 million young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four dropped out of school--thirteen percent of the age group (Hahn, 1987). Of these, 3.5 million were white, 700,000 were black, and 100,000 were from other groups. Moreover, male dropouts outnumbered female dropouts; approximately 16 percent of males between the ages of 18 and 19 were dropouts, while only 12 percent of females in the same age group had dropped out. Using a multi-year tracking system based on graduation statistics, the Chicago Board of Education data indicated that the city's dropout rate was 50.7 percent. Even more surprising was consistently high dropout rate among all students -- 18 percent were white, 57 percent were black, and 25 percent hispanic. It is clear from these data and other reports that dropping out is a problem not confined to a handful of minority students who couldn't learn, but a system-wide failure.

The Current Population Survey defines dropouts as "persons neither enrolled in schools nor high graduates." It does not exclude from this definition such categories as "pregnant teenagers" or "needed at home." If you aren't in school and you haven't graduated, you're a dropout (Hahn, 1987).

Other data show dropout rates, nationally as a whole, have not increased. However, the public has been led to believe proclamations of "record" high dropout figures. Actually, in the 1960's the proportion of dropouts in the 16 to 24 year old age group stood about twenty percent. Since then the rate has declined and remained steady somewhere between 13 percent and 14 percent. Among black youths, the rate fell from 21 percent in 1974 to 15 percent in October, 1985. Since there are not reliable, year to year analyses of age groups at the local level, we have no way of knowing for certain whether dropout rates have worsened in the nation's largest cities. However, every indication is that they have. Dropout rates ranging from 40 percent to 60 percent in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, and other major cities point to a situation of crisis proportions.

Lower graduation rates in the past coincided with economic conditions that enabled many young people to do important work, on farms and in factories and offices, with little schooling. Now it is different. We need to educate a nation of people who think for a living, according to the Carnegie Report (1986) "or we shall fail to compete successfully in the emerging, international, post industrial economy" (p. 11).

The High School and Beyond study (Barro and Kolstad,

1986) showed that within four years about half of the sophomores who left school ultimately returned or were enrolled in General Equivalency Diploma (GED) classes. For these youths, dropping out was an interruption rather than a permanent condition. In California, a government study found that 39 percent of the 1983 dropouts had furthered their education one year later by receiving a GED or by entering a trade school or community college program. Among those who did drop out, white students were most likely to return to high school (Hahn, 1987).

The surveys also showed that the rates at which students returned to school are consistently associated with test scores. Economist Andrew Sum reported that dropouts with ability test scores ranging from middle to the top of the normal distribution curve are two to three times more likely to return to school than those who score at the lower end of the curve (Hahn, 1987). This association is particularly strong for ethnic minorities; the majority of high-scoring black and hispanic dropouts return to school, while less than 23 percent of the low-scoring minority dropouts return to high school. In fact, there is some evidence that minority youths with high test scores may be more likely to return and complete high school than their white counterparts.

A review of the principal reasons why youngsters drop out of school may provide a rough blueprint for how additional resources should be allocated most effectively. Students report many reasons for dropping out, poor grades, dislike for school, alienation from peers, marriage or pregnancy, and employment. The "good" son or daughter may leave school to help parents and siblings through a financial crisis. But the most common reason for leaving school is poor academic performance; 42 percent of the dropouts in *High School and Beyond* (1986) reported grades of mostly D's in school. Male dropouts cite school and employment factors more often than females, who cite marriage more often than their male counterparts. However, some 13 percent of males and only eight percent of females cite "had to support family" as their reason for dropping out of school (Hahn, 1987). Two unpublished surveys of Chicago high students reported contradictory findings. One study (Kyle, 1984) found gangs as the primary reason; the other (Miller, 1984) economic reasons. Recurring themes in the literature indicate that potential and actual school-age dropouts suffer from low-self esteem and disaffiliation from school. Other studies report over-age, low reading scores, poverty, school retention, dangerous schools, illness and family responsibilities.

Many young black people believe that they risk rejection by their peers if they demonstrate too much enthusiasm for their school work. Reports of overt

hostility shown to students known to be high academic achievers are not uncommon. Given the obvious importance of intellectual development and the sacrifices that have been made to provide opportunities for competition and development, the apparent negative value placed on intellectual performance by so many otherwise competitive black young people is puzzling. "Getting over" or dropping out represents a retreat from competition, lack of sharpness and resolve, and an obvious loss of focus on intellectual development.

A variety of studies have identified the following ten conditions as major risk factors indicating that a student might be in danger of dropping out:

1. Behind in grade level and older than classmates.
2. Poor academic performance.
3. Dislike school.
4. Detention and suspension.
5. Pregnancy.
6. Welfare recipients and member of single-parent household.
7. Work.
8. Military service.
9. Undiagnosed learning disabilities.
10. Language difficulties.

From poor academic performance to repeated suspensions and detentions and from language barriers to emotional stress, the list of risk factors is disheartening. However, we can identify the critical elements that foreshadow the decision to drop out, and this should give us some reason for optimism. If schools can begin to respond to those difficulties early enough, the dropout rate may be diminished significantly (Hahn, 1987).

The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship (1988) found that too often that any discussion of the problems of the young leads quickly to criticisms of the schools for failing to do their job. Mostly, such attacks are unfair and unwarranted. Students may work hard through twelve grades, master the basic skills, compile adequate academic records, and graduate in good standing, but they are still likely to encounter problems in their efforts to embark on productive careers. The primary problems are the economy and the career path that are open to the young.

On the other hand, researchers have confirmed what teachers have long recognized that children learn in different ways. Some children, who do not absorb much from books and lectures, perform far better when they are allowed to work at their own pace or to learn through hands-on-activities. The education system rewards students,

who learn well through conventional paper-pencil tasks, but the system should not penalize young people who learn best in other ways. They may have the skills and abilities, rather than ignore those young people who do not fit "the proper mold". There is a severe lack of programs for the at-risk student.

Brown (1986) reported that state education systems can make profound positive or negative contributions to any broad societal effort to solve the complex problems of disconnection. He said, "We have, then, a dilemma. We have an ominous school disconnection movement taking place, while, at the same time, policy makers have implemented a massive school reform movement." Although the reform movement could address the disconnection movement, it has not thus far. The two are passing like ships in the night. State education policy can determine the degree to which schools are part of the solution or part of the problem. Policy is more than the broad goals and directions that leaders are expected to articulate, such as "a policy of equal opportunity" or a "full employment policy." Policy also includes the laws that legislatures pass that are particular expressions of policies; the court decisions and legal opinions that set or clarify policies; the board decisions that instrumentalize policies; and the rules and regulations that flow from laws, board rulings, court decisions or executive orders. So conceived, policies can be seen to affect the thoughts, feelings and behavior of the people who are most responsible for carrying them out. Policy determines where students go to school, what courses they take, how many hours they are in school, what textbooks they read, what teachers are available, what resources are available to the teacher, how much power teachers have to control their working conditions, and much more. Policy can influence the very climate of the school, putting frowns or smiles on the faces of the people in the halls, laughter or gloom in the classroom.

For several years we have witnessed a surge of changes in state education policy aimed at reforming the schools. Most of the recommendations of reform commissions had to do with strengthening the curriculum, setting higher standards, focusing more on academic achievement and improving the teacher work force. Such changes are not like to address the problems disadvantaged students pose and could well exacerbate them. Few comprehensive state reform packages have provided remediation for students who do not meet the new standard. A recent study by MDC. Inc. revealed that fewer than one-fourth of the state commissions and task forces failed to recommend reforms focused on at-risk youth. Only 15 commissions in 12 states had so much as one recommendation aimed at a group that could be described as at-risk, the report noted. Furthermore, only a "tiny minority" saw any reason for schools to collaborate with

other public agencies to deal with at-risk students (Brown, 1986).

High school dropouts have few options. Most jobs (and the armed forces) require a high school diploma and academic skills. Many dropouts aspire to go to college. For many, their only option is the General Education Development Test (GED). To adult dropouts the GED is a "second change", and for those of school-age who want an alternative finishing high school it is a "first chance."

Does enrolling in a program leading to an alternative degree, such as the General Equivalence Diploma (GED), serve dropouts well? The number of 17 and 18 year olds taking the GED test has increased over the past decade, showing that the test has become better known and that the GED has become more widely accepted as an alternative to the high school diploma.

In 1981, 711,000 people took the GED; 72 percent passed. Slightly less than one-third of the GED test takers were 19 years old or younger. These young people tended to be the most employable of the school-leavers, since the major reason they cited for pursuing the GED was "job related" (Hahn, 1987). But there are even fewer studies on why adults in GED programs did not complete high school.

A Wisconsin study by Quinn and Haberman (1986) showed that the GED certificate holder is a high-risk student in the four-year college. The GED credential does not insure the student possess the skill or perseverance necessary to complete college. Nor is the GED certificate, by itself, a helpful screening device to identify student who will succeed in college. A number of students with low GED scores achieve success in college, while many high scoring students failed.

In cases, where students have been specially prepared to take the GED test, GED holders may have reading levels (as measure by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test) as low as fifth or sixth grade. Such students are not good prospects even for remedial help at the college level.

At risk students and non-credentialed adults need an alternative to the GED such as the adult high school diploma offered in California, the external high school program at Wisconsin's Waukesha County Technical Institute, or other programs which more closely match high school in providing students with basic skills, academic preparation and "staying power." A second change "high school diploma, with a curriculum designed by adult basic educators and the state superintendent, could be offered by community colleges and high schools, and it could serve as a remedial program for current GED holders who want to go on to college but are under-prepared (Quinn and Haberman, 1986).

As GED holders now stand the GED test might come with a warning analogous to that found on a package of cigarettes. "Passing the GED is not as good as finishing high school and raising the passing level for scores on the GED will not make it a measure equivalent to student success in completing all subjects in a typical high school curriculum." If success in some form of postsecondary education is the goal, the "hype" and the popularity that have grown up around the GED have created a misleading myth. High school and postsecondary programs need to be improved. Individual students, at all level, must be helped, and that is a difficult and expensive task. The GED does not appear to be a quick fix.

Educators will need to consider whether GED recipients will be at a major disadvantage in the increasing competitive job market? Will they be the last hired and the first fired? Does the GED mask a serious deficiency in reading, writing and computing? Are minority and females dropouts pressured to pursue the GED while white male dropouts are offered incentives to return to conventional schools that confer the traditional diplomas? Here is a topic that cries out for research.

Foley's survey, cited in Hahn's article (1987), found that in New York City's alternative school system truant youths and/or students with poor academic or behavioral records improved their attendance by almost 40 percent when they enrolled in an alternative school; they also earned 60 percent more school credits than they had in their former school. Alternative schools work well for highly motivated former dropouts but not always so well for others. Foley's most important findings were that alternative schools that attract the most dropout-prone youths also had the highest rates of school-leaving among alternative schools.

Foley also identified two critical elements, which she believed could enable alternative schools to retain more students: the intensity of the learning environment and the concern accorded the social and emotional needs of the students. The most successful alternative schools were those that challenged students academically and that provided personal counseling and were staffed by caring adults. Such alternative schools share some of the characteristics documented in the effective schools literature; highly targeted services for a relatively homogeneous school population, strong principals, small school size, teachers who actively participate in counseling students, student involvement in school governance and classroom activity, opportunities for learning by doing, and clear standards, rules, and regulations.

Alternative schools are often the best available option for both potential and actual dropouts, especially if the

programs employ reasonable criteria for eligibility, teach real skills, and accommodate working students. Once again, however, alternative schools in and of themselves are not a guarantee of success for all dropouts (Hahn, 1987).

Accordingly, there is solid evidence that the Job Corp, the nation's largest training program for dropouts, does help participants find employment. Those who take part in the Job Corp earned an average of 15 percent more per year than did a similar group of nonparticipants. A higher share of participants also completed high school, entered the military, and stayed away from welfare programs. Although studies reveal that the cost per participant in the Job Corp has been high (currently about \$9,500), the benefits of the program exceeded the cost.

Certainly, the intensity of service, the mix of remedial education and skills training, the direct federal oversight with contracts given to private management combine to produce an effective program. In addition, the participants live away from home, which frees staff members and participants from distracting influences and allows them to take seriously the challenge of upgrading skills. Another contributing factor is the experience with program planning and design gained by the Job Corp during its nearly 25-year history. Throughout this period, the program has experimented with learning methods suitable for disadvantaged dropouts, including its own approach to competency-based, individualized instruction. The approach is not only used in many centers but has, in fact, become something of a model for regular school and training systems. This process of experimentation and standardization could only bear fruit in a program that is allowed to operate for several years.

Conventional education and the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) is not the solution to the potential dropout nor the student at-risk problem. Every student is entitled to a decent education to be able to compete and participate in the current job market. Therefore, alternative high schools with a traditional curriculum designed by teachers, principals and the superintendents of schools would be more suitable for at-risk students. And student would receive a high school diploma just as if the students had completed a conventional high school.

The alternative high school should have the same characteristics as a good conventional high school--target service for relatively homogeneous school population, small school size, teacher who actively participate in counseling, strong principals, student involvement in school government, classroom activities, opportunities for learning by doing, and clear standards, rules, and regulations. The learning environment should not resemble the traditional classroom,

and students should be challenged academically. Educators and administrators can identify the major risk factors indicating that a student might be in danger of dropping out. This should enable teachers, administrators, school counselors to get involve and also start informing students early about alternative schools before they become dropouts.

To determine why students dropout of schools and to identify at-risk students, there is a need to identify those factors that precipitated early school leaving. the most valid and reliable source for such data are the adults, who did not complete elementary and/or high school, returning to continue their education and obtain a secondary school certificate--the GED student.

### Problem of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that contributed to GED adults dropping out of high school.

The general objectives were:

1. What are the factors that caused GED adults to dropout of high school?
2. What are the reasons they are in GED programs?
3. What are their career aspirations?
4. Were they ever retained in a grade?
5. What were their attitudes toward school?
6. What was their self-esteem in school?
7. What was their academic achievement level?

### Method of Data Collection

The data were collected via a non-normative survey instrument. A sample of 200 adults enrolled in the GED program at Thornton Community College. Only 89 of the questionnaires were useable. The self-devised instrument included 10 personal data items, 35 items on dropout factors and 3 opened-end questions on GED enrollment, aspirations and the number of years since dropping out of high school and why they are returning to school. The data were tabulated in terms of means and standard deviations and percentages. The Chi Square test was employed at the .05 level of confidence.

### Results of Study

A summary of the combined responses of the sample in Table I show that an insignificant percentage (only 6 to 20%) dropped out of high school because they were in "trouble with the law", "influenced by friends or peers", "on welfare", "unemployed parents", "gang involvement", "suspension", "absenteeism", "child abuse", "sports", "too

old", "illness", "afraid to go to school", "disabled" or "lived in a dangerous neighborhood". Although 46 to 50 percent felt they were good students in math and reading, 38 percent said they got low grades, and 32 percent indicated they could not do the school work.

However, 35 percent indicated they had to work and 31 percent quit school to work. In addition, 47 percent had unemployed and poor parents. Apparently this affected their self-esteem. Twenty-four to 27 percent of the sample were happy at school and felt teachers did not like them. These negative feelings reflected unhappy school experiences and home life, as illustrated by the evident that 47 percent did not like school and 46 percent ran away from home.

While only 19 percent were absent frequently and 20 percent were suspended often, and 21 percent were involved with gangs, the results suggest that a combination of factors associated with lower socioeconomic status caused the sample to leave school early. On the other hand, 60 to the 83 percent of the respondents gave negative responses to above questions, indicating other and more subtle factors or a combination of all factors were involved. Fifty-one percent said they had friends in school, but only 24 percent actually got into trouble. For females, pregnancy appeared to be a significant contributing factor for quitting school (52 percent were pregnant). Twelve percent of males indicated they were pregnant? They either misread the question or they quit school to secure employment to support their child?

Data were collected on the ethnicity of the sample. Ninety percent of the respondents were black, 3 percent white, 4 percent hispanic and 2 percent other. Since the sample size for whites, hispanics and others is insignificant, analysis by ethnicity would have little meaning. An analysis of the results in terms of gender shows that 56 percent of males compared to 38 percent of females did not like school (see Table II). Also more males (35%) than females (6%) belonged to gangs. Males (49%) had lower grades than females (28%). Differences in responses to the other issues were not statistically significant (.05 level).

When the data in Table III were cross tabulated with the question as to whether they failed a grade, the results showed that 68 percent were retained at least once; 29 percent were not. Failing a grade did not appear to have a significant effect on the number of friends or their grades--i.e., 54% of those who failed and 52% did not fail a grade received low grades. Similarly, a higher percentage of both groups (57% and 68%, respectively) liked their teachers. Failing, a grade appeared to have significant influence on respondents success in school.

The two major factors that may have been a motivative to drop out of school appeared to be "Not interested in School" (55%) and "Did not like School" (52%). Respondents also indicated that although 44 percent got low grades, 49 percent and 44 percent said they were good readers and good in math, respectively.

Respondents were requested to indicate the family structure in which they lived (see Table IV). Sixty-four percent of those who lived with relatives "Had to work", as compared to 46 percent of two spouse and 10 percent of mother only families. Type of family seems to have little influence on whether respondents did not like school, expect 42 to 50 percent (across family type) did not like school. In addition, 50 percent of the respondents who lived with relatives received low grades as compared to 39 and 32 percent who lived with both parents and mother only, respectively. No other significant differences were found.

Also, size of family in which they were raised, showed no significant influence on their responses. School transfer seemed to have no significant influence on the dependent variables, except that those respondents who had the highest transfer rate appeared to be less interested in school than their non-transferee peers.

The results showed that 53 percent had attended a segregated black school, 4 percent a segregated white school and 35 percent an integrated school (see Table V). The findings suggest that respondents who attended a predominately black school 55 percent were not interested and 51 percent did not like school in contrast to 34 and 37 percent, respectively who attended an integrated school. Of those who attended a black (segregated) school 40 percent as compared to 23 percent who attended an integrated school quit school to work (although the majority 51% and 66% did not quit school because of type of school attended). Similar trends were apparent in regards to black (segregated) school attendance. Twenty-eight percent of black students did not like the teachers (17% integrated school), 28 percent could not do school work (11% integrated school) and 43 percent got low grades (23% integrated school).

Responses were analyzed in terms of the influence of education level of parents and their respondent's school experience (see Table VI). Forty-three percent of their

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\* Did not include segregated white students because of insignificant sample size.

parents completed high school, 31 percent did not and 15 percent did not know. Fifty-eight percent as compared to 44 percent non-high school graduate to high school graduate parents, respectively) were not interested in school. The pregnancy rate was higher 48 to 23 percent for respondents of non-high to school graduate parents. Additional differences were noted when the responses of the sample, whose parents did not complete high school was compared with those whose parents completed high school. Comparing the former with the latter group, 39 percent to 28 percent quit school to work, 36 percent to 21 percent did not like the teachers, 39 percent to 9 percent did not like themselves in school, 36 percent to 19 percent could not do school work, and 42 percent to 14 percent came from a poor family, respectively. Hence, the educational level of parents was a factor but not a significant determinant of their offspring's school performance and attitude toward school.

Lastly, the results were examined based on place of birth (see Table VII). Fifty-nine percent were born in Chicago. Of those born in Chicago, 49 percent and 44 percent, respectively, were not interested in and did not like school. A higher percent of Chicago born were involved with gangs (28%) and suspended from school (21%) as compared to 6 percent and 14 percent, respectively, not born in Chicago. Also Chicago born students (28%) got into trouble more often at school than non-Chicago respondents (14%). The difference in responses of the two groups were not statistically significant.

The respondents were asked "Why they were returning to school." The typical written responses were as follows:

Male respondents' responses:

I want a good education so my daughter will look up to her father and say my father got a high school diploma.  
 Get an education.  
 Get a GED.  
 Had no high school degree.  
 Need an education to be successful.  
 The fact that I'm now realizing that the older I become the more things that I have to get to survive and the more things that I desire to have. "Such as a car". My own home, a job, a wonderful wife.  
 To get somewhere in life.  
 I want a better life.  
 I am trying to be better.  
 Enhance my life.  
 Because I am no longer working.  
 I must have my GED for a better life.  
 It is hard to make it without a high school education, even to get a good job.  
 Need some education.

I need the education now.  
 I had to dropout of high school eight years ago.  
 I want to improve my skills and prepare for college.  
 To touch up on my education.

Female respondents' responses:

Getting general assistance.  
 I have grown to know the difference between success and failure.  
 Want high school diploma.  
 I got pregnant - my child is older and had no one to watch my child.  
 Get an education that I missed when I was younger.  
 Did not complete high school.  
 Want a high school education.  
 Make something of my life and set a good example for my child.  
 Want to get off welfare and be successful.  
 Finish my GED; become a success in life.  
 Need to learn more.  
 I want to be somebody.  
 Want to get my GED.  
 Need the GED (I dropped out of high school to help my mother).  
 It is necessary to complete high school.  
 To learn how to read and write to help my children to read and write.  
 I want to be proud of myself.  
 To make my self better.  
 Get educated.  
 I want a career.  
 Pass my GED.  
 Finish high school.  
 Public Assistance is making me go to school.  
 For enrichment.  
 Need more schooling.  
 To get a job.  
 Make a good influence on my children and family.  
 I don't want to be dumb my whole life.  
 I want to be proud of myself.  
 So my daughter will be proud of me.  
 I would like to be somebody someday.  
 I want more out of life than the streets.  
 I would like to become a real person.  
 I have to finish school to take care of my kids and get off public aid and get a job.  
 I need to qualify for a job.  
 It will mean a lot to finish high school.  
 Want to learn all I can.

The sample was asked "What they expected to do after completion of the GED program". Their written responses were as follows:

Male respondents' responses:

Go to college.  
 Go to trade school.  
 Get a job.  
 Complete my general education.  
 Get employment and continue my education.  
 Will be leaving for the United State Armed forces to  
 take the career of a medic to become a medical doctor.  
 Get a job and get out of Harvey.  
 Don't know what I want to do.  
 Get a job and money and pursue my dream.  
 Continue studying.  
 Join the army.  
 Study Computers.  
 More schooling.  
 College and major in business.  
 Go to college and study law enforcement and become a  
 state policeman.  
 Learn a trade.

Female respondents' responses:

Go to work--good paying job.  
 Continue my education.  
 Get the GED.  
 Go on to college.  
 Go on to further schooling.  
 Get a data processing job.  
 Work and go back to college.  
 Advance in my job.  
 Become a nurse.  
 Become a court reporter.  
 Develop a skill.  
 Make my life better--get a job  
 Earn a living--get a job.  
 See what I can do with my life.  
 Get a college degree in business.  
 Learn computer and accounting in college.  
 Further my career.  
 Take college course in medical field.  
 Become a nurse to help sick children.  
 Go to college.  
 Get a job, house and car.  
 Go to business school.  
 Get a good job and some money in the bank.

## Summary and Conclusions

The findings show that very few of the sample had been  
 in trouble with the law, influenced by friends or peers,  
 involved in gangs, suspended from school, abused as a child,  
 absent, ill, disabled, afraid to go to school or they lived

in dangerous community. The data suggest that poverty--had to work, parents were unemployed and they were unhappy in the school and teachers did not like them were contributing factors. It appears that not only did poverty influence their decision to leave school, but there was a clash of socioeconomic values between themselves and the educational staff, particularly teachers. Pregnancy had the greatest influence on females decision to quite school.

Since ninety percent of the sample was black, ethnicity was a moot issue. Not only did more males have lower grades than females, but a high percentage of males disliked school.

Failing a grade appeared to influence but did not have a significant influence respondents' attitude toward school. Similarly family size had little influence on their opinions of school. On the other hand, family structure affected their responses. These who lived with relatives "had to work" and "had lower grades" than those who lived with their parent or parents. But number the number of school transfers was also insignificant as a determinant of early school leaving.

However, ethnic composition of school the respondents attended appeared to be a significant factor. A greater percentage of students of predominately black schools had "lower grades", and "did not like school" as compared to those who attended an integrated school. Also the educational level of parents seemed to impact their children's attitudes toward school. Not only was the pregnancy rate high for those students whose parent did not complete high school, but the sample in this category was less interested in school, a higher percentage quit school, did not like their teachers, did not like themselves and could not do the school work. As expected, they indicated their families were poorer than their counterparts. The combined factors of education and poverty had a significant effect on students' performance in and attitudes toward school.

The results also suggested that being born and raised in Chicago had a detrimental influence on student's experience in and opinions of school. However, their open-ended comments were revealing, but sad. They were returning to school to "pickup the pieces" of their life they had missed. They not only regretted not completing high school, but realized that they needed an education to fully participate in society, succeed in life and raise their self-esteem. There appeared to be no difference in the responses of males and females.

Responses to what they were going to do when they received their GED showed they were motivated to continue

their education, secure employment or advance in their job. A significant number desired to attend college. Again male and female responses were similar.

### Conclusions

The results of the current study support many of the findings of Barbara, et.al. (1987) that the high risk student is behind in grade level, older than other students, poor academic performance, disliked school, frequent detention and suspension, pregnancy, from single parent and/or welfare families, leave school for work or military service and linguistic deficient in English. There is also agreement with Miller (1984) and others that dropouts suffer from poverty, low self-esteem and an unstable home life. However, the sample made no excuses nor did they blamed others for their failure to complete high school. Perhaps this is because the primary factors undergirding their problems in school was poverty, social economic status, conflicting social values, education attained by parents and whether they attended a segregated or integrated school. But poverty and social economic background appeared to be the most influential determinants of school success.

### Recommendations

A concerned effort must be made to save children from leaving school earlier. What must be done is to:

1. Reduce the number of students attending a particular school, particularly high risk inner-city schools. Reduce class sizes.
2. Get greater control of the schools, reduce discipline problems, absenteeism, and outside interference. Provide a safe and orderly environment.
3. Implement a homeroom counselling program in which the homeroom teacher, a counselor, or another professional staff is responsible for helping, guiding and becoming someone who the student can confer in terms of their school and personal problems, a type of surrogate parent, a friend, a mentor.
4. Institute a reasonable but structured and strong discipline code and homework policy.
5. Increase staff to provide greater supervision and a conducive learning atmosphere.
6. Involve the parents. Keep them informed of the school's rules and regulations and the progress of the children. Hold parent-teacher-administrator conferences frequently.
7. Provide strong instructional leadership and

- school-wide emphasis on basic skills and high teacher and administrator expectations for student achievement. Emphasize the basics.
8. Provide tutoring for students performing below grade level.
  9. Provide frequent review of student progress.
  10. Inform and consult with parents when their child is absent, misbehaving and failing academically.
  11. Provide intensive remedial and skill training services.
  12. A class should remain with the same teacher for at least two to three years in the primary and elementary grades.
  13. Institute a mentor program and the required social service support.
  14. Institute alternative programs--work study, etc.

The most important element in the educational process, is too keep the at-risk student in school. This can only be done if an orderly, safe, conducive, and helping climate is provided. The emphasis is on the student to help him adjust, feel comfortable, and find success and achievement. The student is primary and his academic, social and emotional needs must be met. The only other alternative is to maintain the "status quo", the high dropout rate, and turn out a population of young people ill-equipped to function in a highly technological society where knowledgeable and skilled, not undereducated and unskilled, workers are needed.

Although GED programs are a good alternative for the early school leaver, it is not the total solution. It is an alternative, a "safety net," a new start. Although GED recipients do not earn as much as high school graduates, their income is higher than dropouts. Passmore's study found 64 percent of GED recipients, 78 percent of those with diplomas and only 56 percent of school leavers were unemployed. Therefore, economically, staying in and returning to school has a direct pay off (Education Week, 1987).

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TABLE I

Total Combined Responses  
(Responses in percentages)  
N=89

|                                             | Yes<br>(Percent) | No  |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|-----|
| Had to work                                 | 35               | 53  |
| Was in trouble with the law                 | 14               | 76* |
| Not interested in school                    | 47               | 44  |
| Did not like school                         | 46               | 47  |
| Ran away from home                          | 9                | 80* |
| Was influenced by my friends to quit school | 13               | 83* |
| Family was on welfare                       | 21               | 74* |
| I was pregnant                              | 32               | 58  |
| Parent(s) were unemployed                   | 21               | 68  |
| Quit school to work                         | 31               | 57  |
| Become involved with a gang                 | 21               | 67* |
| I was suspended from school often           | 20               | 70* |
| I was absent often                          | 19               | 62  |
| Got into trouble at school                  | 24               | 69  |
| I was abused at home                        | 16               | 75* |
| Did not like teachers                       | 27               | 64* |
| I was unhappy in school                     | 24               | 65* |
| I thought I was too dumb                    | 14               | 75* |
| I was too busy with sports                  | 19               | 72* |
| I had friends in school                     | 51               | 38  |
| I did not like myself in school             | 18               | 69* |
| Could not do school work                    | 32               | 65* |
| My family was poor                          | 25               | 65* |
| I got low grades                            | 38               | 48  |
| I was a good reader                         | 50               | 33  |
| I was too old                               | 8                | 79* |
| I was good in math                          | 46               | 39  |
| I was too ill                               | 7                | 82* |
| I was afraid to go to school                | 8                | 78* |
| I was disabled                              | 6                | 81* |
| Teachers thought I was dumb                 | 10               | 74* |
| I lived in a dangerous neighborhood         | 19               | 67* |

\*Significant at .05 level

TABLE II

## Influence of Gender on Responses

| GENDER                                      | MALE<br>N=43 |     | FEMALE<br>N=50 |     |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|-----|----------------|-----|
|                                             | YES          | NO  | YES            | NO  |
|                                             | (Percent)    |     |                |     |
| Had to work                                 | 30           | 63* | 42             | 42  |
| Was in trouble with the law                 | 21           | 72* | 6              | 80* |
| Not interested in school                    | 42           | 49  | 52*            | 38  |
| Did not like school                         | 37           | 56* | 54             | 38  |
| Ran away from home                          | 9            | 81* | 8              | 80* |
| Was influenced by my friends to quit school | 19           | 77* | 6              | 84* |
| Family was on welfare                       | 19           | 74* | 22             | 72* |
| I was pregnant                              | 12           | 77* | 52*            | 48  |
| Parent(s) were unemployed                   | 21           | 67* | 22             | 68* |
| Quit school to work                         | 33           | 58* | 30             | 56* |
| Become involved with a gang                 | 35           | 51* | 6              | 84* |
| I was suspended from school often           | 33           | 58* | 6              | 82* |
| I was absent often                          | 40           | 51* | 18             | 72* |
| Got into trouble at school                  | 33           | 63* | 14             | 74* |
| I was abused at home                        | 16           | 77* | 16             | 72* |
| Did not like teachers                       | 19           | 70* | 32             | 58* |
| I was unhappy in school                     | 26           | 61* | 22             | 68* |
| I thought I was too dumb                    | 16           | 74* | 12             | 76* |
| I was too busy with sports                  | 21           | 74* | 16             | 70* |
| I had friends in school                     | 49           | 40  | 52*            | 36  |
| I did not like myself in school             | 14           | 77* | 22             | 60* |
| Could not do school work                    | 19           | 67* | 24             | 62* |
| My family was poor                          | 26           | 67* | 24             | 62* |
| I got low grades                            | 49           | 40  | 28             | 56* |
| I was a good reader                         | 44           | 40  | 56*            | 26  |
| I was too old                               | 9            | 74* | 6              | 80* |
| I was good in math                          | 40           | 47  | 52*            | 30  |
| I was to ill                                | 5            | 84* | 10             | 80* |
| I was afraid to go to school                | 12           | 74* | 4              | 82* |
| I was disabled                              | 9            | 77* | 2              | 86* |
| Teachers thought I was dumb                 | 16           | 67* | 4              | 80  |
| I lived in a dangerous neighborhood         | 30           | 61* | 8              | 72* |

\*Significant at .05 level

TABLE III

## Effect of Grade Retention on Responses

| DID YOU FAIL A GRADE IN SCHOOL?             | YES<br>N=28 |     |    | (Percent) |     |    | NO<br>N=60 |    |    |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------|-----|----|-----------|-----|----|------------|----|----|
|                                             | Yes         | No  | DK | Yes       | No  | DK | Yes        | No | DK |
| Had to work                                 | 68*         | 0   | 0  | 29        | 57* | 11 |            |    |    |
| Was in trouble with the law                 | 18          | 79* | 0  | 10        | 78* | 3  |            |    |    |
| Not interested in school                    | 43          | 50  | 7  | 50        | 42  | 0  |            |    |    |
| Did not like school                         | 39          | 53  | 7  | 48        | 47  | 0  |            |    |    |
| Ran away from home                          | 11          | 79* | 4  | 8         | 83* | 2  |            |    |    |
| Was influenced by my friends to quit school | 11          | 85* | 0  | 13        | 80* | 0  |            |    |    |
| Family was on welfare                       | 21          | 75* | 0  | 20        | 73* | 0  |            |    |    |
| I was pregnant                              | 32          | 61* | 0  | 31        | 62  | 2  |            |    |    |
| Parent(s) were unemployed                   | 25          | 68* | 0  | 20        | 72* | 2  |            |    |    |
| Quit school to work                         | 25          | 64* | 4  | 32        | 58* | 2  |            |    |    |
| Become involved with a gang                 | 32          | 64* | 4  | 13        | 78* | 2  |            |    |    |
| I was suspended from school often           | 29          | 61* | 4  | 13        | 77* | 2  |            |    |    |
| I was absent often                          | 29          | 68* | 0  | 30        | 60* | 2  |            |    |    |
| Got into trouble at school                  | 36          | 61* | 0  | 18        | 73* | 2  |            |    |    |
| I was abused at home                        | 21          | 68* | 4  | 10        | 82* | 2  |            |    |    |
| Did not like teachers                       | 36          | 57* | 4  | 23        | 68* | 0  |            |    |    |
| I was unhappy in school                     | 25          | 61* | 8  | 23        | 68* | 8  |            |    |    |
| I thought I was too dumb                    | 11          | 82* | 4  | 15        | 75* | 3  |            |    |    |
| I was too busy with sports                  | 18          | 75* | 0  | 18        | 73* | 2  |            |    |    |
| I had friends in school                     | 54*         | 29  | 11 | 59        | 42  | 2  |            |    |    |
| I did not like myself in school             | 18          | 71* | 4  | 18        | 68* | 2  |            |    |    |
| Could not do school work                    | 25          | 57* | 11 | 20        | 70* | 2  |            |    |    |
| My family was poor                          | 29          | 61* | 0  | 23        | 70* | 0  |            |    |    |
| I got low grades                            | 54*         | 32  | 4  | 52*       | 32  | 7  |            |    |    |
| I was a good reader                         | 54*         | 32  | 4  | 52*       | 32  | 7  |            |    |    |
| I was too old                               | 7           | 82* | 4  | 7         | 80* | 2  |            |    |    |
| I was good in math                          | 43          | 46  | 4  | 47        | 35  | 7  |            |    |    |
| I was too ill                               | 7           | 86* | 0  | 8         | 82* | 0  |            |    |    |
| I was afraid to go to school                | 11          | 75* | 4  | 7         | 82* | 2  |            |    |    |
| I was disabled                              | 11          | 79* | 4  | 2         | 87* | 2  |            |    |    |
| Teachers thought I was dumb                 | 21          | 68* | 4  | 5         | 78* | 7  |            |    |    |
| I lived in a dangerous neighborhood         | 21          | 64* | 0  | 17        | 70* | 5  |            |    |    |

\*Significant at .05 level

TABLE IV  
Effect of Family Structure on Responses

| WITH WHOM DID YOU LIVE?                     | FATH./MOTH.<br>N=28 |     | FATHER<br>N=3 |      | MOTHER<br>N=31 |     | RELATIVES<br>N=14 |     |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----|---------------|------|----------------|-----|-------------------|-----|
|                                             |                     |     | (Percent)     |      |                |     |                   |     |
|                                             | Yes                 | No  | Yes           | No   | Yes            | No  | Yes               | No  |
| Had to work                                 | 46                  | 43  | 33            | 33   | 10             | 81* | 64*               | 29  |
| Was in trouble with the law                 | 18                  | 71* | 0             | 100* | 13             | 81* | 14                | 71* |
| Not interested in school                    | 50                  | 43  | 100*          | 0    | 45             | 42  | 36                | 50* |
| Did not like school                         | 50                  | 43  | 67*           | 33   | 42             | 48  | 50                | 43  |
| Ran away from home                          | 7                   | 82* | 0             | 100* | 10             | 77* | 14                | 79* |
| Was influenced by my friends to quit school | 4                   | 86* | 0             | 100* | 16             | 77* | 14                | 79* |
| Family was on welfare                       | 18                  | 71* | 0             | 100* | 26             | 71* | 29                | 64* |
| I was pregnant                              | 32                  | 54* | 0             | 100* | 36             | 65* | 36                | 43  |
| Parent(s) were unemployed                   | 21                  | 64* | 0             | 100* | 26             | 68* | 29                | 57* |
| Quit school to work                         | 21                  | 61* | 33            | 67*  | 29             | 65* | 29                | 64* |
| Become involved with a gang                 | 18                  | 75* | 0             | 100* | 26             | 71* | 29                | 64* |
| I was suspended from school often           | 14                  | 71* | 0             | 100* | 26             | 71* | 29                | 64* |
| I was absent often                          | 21                  | 64* | 33            | 67*  | 32             | 65* | 43                | 50  |
| Got into trouble at school                  | 25                  | 61* | 33            | 67*  | 19             | 77* | 29                | 64* |
| I was abused at home                        | 25                  | 64* | 0             | 100* | 10             | 81* | 29                | 64* |
| Did not like teachers                       | 29                  | 54* | 33            | 67*  | 26             | 68* | 14                | 79* |
| I was unhappy in school                     | 29                  | 57* | 67*           | 33   | 23             | 68* | 14                | 79* |
| I thought I was too dumb                    | 21                  | 64* | 67*           | 33   | 23             | 68* | 14                | 79* |
| I was too busy with sports                  | 21                  | 68* | 0             | 100* | 36             | 68* | 7                 | 79* |
| I had friends in school                     | 57*                 | 29  | 33            | 67*  | 42             | 48  | 71*               | 21  |
| I did not like myself in school             | 25                  | 54* | 33            | 67*  | 16             | 71* | 21                | 71* |
| Could not do school work                    | 29                  | 50* | 0             | 100* | 16             | 74* | 36                | 50* |
| My family was poor                          | 32                  | 54* | 0             | 100* | 19             | 74* | 21                | 64* |
| I got low grades                            | 39                  | 32  | 67*           | 33   | 32             | 61* | 50                | 43  |
| I was a good reader                         | 39                  | 32  | 67*           | 33   | 58*            | 36  | 71*               | 7   |
| I was too old                               | 14                  | 68* | 0             | 100* | 3              | 87* | 7                 | 71* |
| I was good in math                          | 46                  | 39  | 0             | 67*  | 52             | 36  | 50                | 36  |
| I was to ill                                | 11                  | 75* | 0             | 100* | 7              | 84* | 0                 | 86* |
| I was afraid to go to school                | 0                   | 79* | 0             | 100* | 13             | 74* | 0                 | 86* |
| I was disabled                              | 7                   | 75* | 0             | 100* | 3              | 84* | 0                 | 86* |
| Teachers thought I was dumb                 | 4                   | 75* | 0             | 100* | 16             | 65* | 0                 | 79* |
| I lived in a dangerous neighborhood         | 4                   | 64* | 33            | 67*  | 26             | 65* | 7                 | 64* |

\*Significant at .05 level

TABLE V  
Effect of Ethnic Composition of School on Responses

| MY SCHOOL WAS MOSTLY:                       | BLACK<br>N=53 |     | WHITE<br>N=4<br>(Percent) |      | INTEGRATED<br>N=35 |     |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------|-----|---------------------------|------|--------------------|-----|
|                                             | Yes           | No  | Yes                       | No   | Yes                | No  |
| Had to work                                 | 42            | 47  | 0                         | 100* | 34                 | 51  |
| Was in trouble with the law                 | 15            | 70* | 0                         | 100* | 11                 | 83* |
| Not interested in school                    | 55            | 36  | 75*                       | 25   | 34                 | 57* |
| Did not like school                         | 51            | 40  | 75*                       | 25   | 37                 | 60* |
| Ran away from home                          | 9             | 76* | 25                        | 50   | 6                  | 91* |
| Was influenced by my friends to quit school | 11            | 77* | 25                        | 75*  | 11                 | 86* |
| Family was on welfare                       | 25            | 68* | 0                         | 100* | 14                 | 80* |
| I was pregnant                              | 34            | 53  | 25                        | 75*  | 29                 | 66* |
| Parent(s) were unemployed                   | 26            | 64* | 0                         | 75*  | 17                 | 71* |
| Quit school to work                         | 40            | 51  | 25                        | 50*  | 23                 | 66* |
| Become involved with a gang                 | 21            | 72* | 25                        | 50*  | 17                 | 74* |
| I was suspended from school often           | 19            | 68* | 50                        | 50   | 14                 | 77* |
| I was absent often                          | 32            | 57  | 25                        | 75*  | 23                 | 69* |
| Got into trouble at school                  | 19            | 70* | 50                        | 50   | 25                 | 59* |
| I was abused at home                        | 19            | 70* | 50*                       | 25   | 28                 | 62* |
| Did not like teachers                       | 28            | 62* | 75*                       | 25   | 17                 | 71* |
| I was unhappy in school                     | 25            | 62  | 25                        | 50   | 20                 | 71* |
| I thought I was too dumb                    | 13            | 72* | 50                        | 50   | 9                  | 86* |
| I was too busy with sports                  | 21            | 68* | 0                         | 75*  | 17                 | 77* |
| I had friends in school                     | 59*           | 30  | 0                         | 75*  | 43                 | 46  |
| I did not like myself in school             | 25            | 59* | 50*                       | 25   | 6                  | 86* |
| Could not do school work                    | 28            | 55* | 0                         | 75*  | 11                 | 80* |
| My family was poor                          | 34            | 53  | 25                        | 50*  | 9                  | 86* |
| I got low grades                            | 43            | 43  | 75*                       | 0    | 23                 | 63* |
| I was a good reader                         | 55*           | 30  | 25                        | 50*  | 46                 | 35  |
| I was too old                               | 11            | 74* | 0                         | 75*  | 3                  | 83* |
| I was good in math                          | 51*           | 32  | 75*                       | 0    | 37                 | 49  |
| I was to ill                                | 6             | 83* | 50*                       | 25   | 6                  | 86* |
| I was afraid to go to school                | 6             | 77* | 25                        | 50*  | 6                  | 85* |
| I was disabled                              | 4             | 81* | 0                         | 75*  | 9                  | 83* |
| Teachers thought I was dumb                 | 8             | 74* | 0                         | 75*  | 11                 | 77* |
| I lived in a dangerous neighborhood         | 21            | 62* | 0                         | 75*  | 14                 | 74* |

\*Significant at .05 level

TABLE VI  
Effect of Influence of Parents' Educational Level  
on Respondents' Responses

| MY PARENTS FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL:            | YES<br>N=43 |     | NO<br>N=31<br>(Percent) |     | DON'T KNOW<br>N=15 |     |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
|                                             | Yes         | No  | Yes                     | No  | Yes                | No  |
| Had to work                                 | 33          | 56* | 42                      | 48  | 47                 | 33  |
| Was in trouble with the law                 | 14          | 77* | 19                      | 71* | 0                  | 80* |
| Not interested in school                    | 44          | 40  | 58*                     | 39  | 33                 | 60  |
| Did not like school                         | 49          | 42  | 52                      | 45  | 33                 | 53  |
| Ran away from home                          | 9           | 79* | 13                      | 81* | 0                  | 80* |
| Was influenced by my friends to quit school | 15          | 77* | 9                       | 68* | 5                  | 73* |
| Family was on welfare                       | 26          | 70* | 26                      | 81* | 0                  | 87* |
| I was pregnant                              | 23          | 67* | 48                      | 52  | 20                 | 60* |
| Parent(s) were unemployed                   | 21          | 67* | 29                      | 58* | 13                 | 67* |
| Quit school to work                         | 28          | 61* | 39                      | 52  | 27                 | 60* |
| Become involved with a gang                 | 26          | 67* | 13                      | 42  | 20                 | 73* |
| I was suspended from school often           | 23          | 70* | 16                      | 74* | 13                 | 67* |
| I was absent often                          | 30          | 63* | 29                      | 65* | 27                 | 53* |
| Got into trouble at school                  | 28          | 67* | 19                      | 71* | 20                 | 67* |
| I was abused at home                        | 12          | 79* | 19                      | 74* | 20                 | 67* |
| Did not like teachers                       | 21          | 67* | 36                      | 61* | 20                 | 60* |
| I was unhappy in school                     | 21          | 67* | 32                      | 65* | 20                 | 53* |
| I thought I was too dumb                    | 16          | 74* | 16                      | 77* | 7                  | 73* |
| I was too busy with sports                  | 23          | 70* | 10                      | 81* | 27                 | 60* |
| I had friends in school                     | 54*         | 33  | 52                      | 42  | 47                 | 40  |
| I did not like myself in school             | 9           | 77* | 39                      | 52  | 7                  | 73* |
| Could not do school work                    | 19          | 67* | 36                      | 58* | 7                  | 73* |
| My family was poor                          | 14          | 79* | 42                      | 48  | 27                 | 53  |
| I got low grades                            | 39          | 49  | 32                      | 52  | 40                 | 40  |
| I was a good reader                         | 65*         | 23  | 42                      | 42  | 33                 | 40  |
| I was too old                               | 9           | 77* | 10                      | 74* | 16                 | 80* |
| I was good in math                          | 47          | 40  | 52                      | 32  | 27                 | 47* |
| I was to ill                                | 2           | 86* | 10                      | 84* | 7                  | 73* |
| I was afraid to go to school                | 9           | 74* | 7                       | 94* | 0                  | 80* |
| I was disabled                              | 5           | 81* | 7                       | 84* | 0                  | 80* |
| Teachers thought I was dumb                 | 12          | 74* | 10                      | 81* | 0                  | 60* |
| I lived in a dangerous neighborhood         | 16          | 70* | 16                      | 68* | 27                 | 53* |

\*Significant at .05 level

TABLE VII

| I WAS BORN IN CHICAGO:                      | Influence of Place of Birth on Responses |                   |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------|
|                                             | YES                                      | NO                |
|                                             | N=57<br>(Percent)                        | N=35<br>(Percent) |
|                                             | A B                                      | A B               |
| Had to work                                 | 29 58*                                   | 49 40             |
| Was in trouble with the law                 | 16 77*                                   | 9 74*             |
| Not interested in school                    | 49 44                                    | 33 74*            |
| Did not like school                         | 44 49                                    | 51 40             |
| Ran away from home                          | 11 79*                                   | 6 83*             |
| Was influenced by my friends to quit school | 16 77*                                   | 6 86*             |
| Family was on welfare                       | 18 75*                                   | 26 71*            |
| I was pregnant                              | 35 58*                                   | 26 63*            |
| Parent(s) were unemployed                   | 16 72*                                   | 31 63*            |
| Quit school to work                         | 30 58*                                   | 34 57             |
| Become involved with a gang                 | 28 67*                                   | 6 86* (**)        |
| I was suspended from school often           | 21 70*                                   | 14 74* (**)       |
| I was absent often                          | 25 65*                                   | 34 60* (**)       |
| Got into trouble at school                  | 28 65*                                   | 14 77* (**)       |
| I was abused at home                        | 21 68*                                   | 9 86*             |
| Did not like teachers                       | 25 65*                                   | 29 63*            |
| I was unhappy in school                     | 25 61*                                   | 23 71*            |
| I thought I was too dumb                    | 12 75*                                   | 17 77*            |
| I was too busy with sports                  | 21 70*                                   | 14 77*            |
| I had friends in school                     | 46 42                                    | 60*31             |
| I did not like myself in school             | 14 70*                                   | 26 66*            |
| Could not do school work                    | 14 70*                                   | 34 57*            |
| My family was poor                          | 16 74*                                   | 40 51             |
| I got low grades                            | 37 47                                    | 40 51             |
| I was a good reader                         | 49 32                                    | 54*34             |
| I was too old                               | 7 81                                     | 9 74*             |
| I was good in math                          | 47 40                                    | 43 34             |
| I was to ill                                | 9 81*                                    | 3 86*             |
| I was afraid to go to school                | 6 81*                                    | 9 77*             |
| I was disabled                              | 4 83*                                    | 6 83*             |
| Teachers thought I was dumb                 | 9 74*                                    | 9 77*             |
| I lived in a dangerous neighborhood         | 21 67*                                   | 11 69*            |

\*Significant at .05 level

\*\*Differences between yes responses significant at .05 level.

**ABE/GED DATA SHEET**

**Directions:** Circle one and answer the questions that apply. Thank you!

1. I am:      **Black**      **White**      **Hispanic**      **Asian**      **Other (name)\_\_\_\_\_**
2. Gender:                      **Male**                      **Female**
3. Did you fail a grade in school:      **Yes**      **No (If yes, how many?\_\_\_\_\_)**
4. Did you dropout of school?      **Yes**      **No (If yes, circle one: Elem. Sec.)**
5. How many children were in your family? \_\_\_\_\_
6. I lived with:      **Father & Mother**      **Father**      **Mother**      **Relatives**
7. Did you transfer from one school to another?                      **Yes**      **No (If yes, how many times?\_\_\_\_\_)**
8. My School was mostly:      **Black**      **White**      **Hispanic**      **Mixed**
9. My parents finished high school:                      **Yes**      **No**      **Don't Know**
10. I was born in Chicago:                      **Yes**      **No**      **Don't Know**

After completing the data sheet, please complete the following questionnaire. Thank you!

### ABE/GED QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Below are reasons why a person would not complete high school. Please check a response for each category.  
Thank you!

|                                                | Yes | No  | Don't know |
|------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|------------|
| 1. Had to work                                 | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 2. Was in trouble with the law                 | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 3. Not interested in school                    | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 4. Did not like school                         | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 5. Ran away from home                          | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 6. Was influenced by my friends to quit school | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 7. Family was on welfare                       | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 8. I was pregnant                              | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 9. Parent(s) were unemployed                   | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 10. Quit school to work                        | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 11. Became involved with a gang                | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 12. I was suspended from school often          | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 13. I was absent often                         | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 14. Got into trouble at school                 | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 15. I was abused at home                       | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 16. Did not like teachers                      | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 17. I was unhappy in school                    | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 18. I thought I was too dumb                   | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 19. I was too busy with sports                 | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 20. I had friends in school                    | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 21. I did not like myself in school            | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 22. Could not do school work                   | ___ | ___ | ___        |
| 23. My family was poor                         | ___ | ___ | ___        |

24. I got low grades \_\_\_\_\_
25. I was a good reader \_\_\_\_\_
26. I was too old \_\_\_\_\_
27. I was good in math \_\_\_\_\_
28. I was too ill \_\_\_\_\_
29. I was afraid to go to school \_\_\_\_\_
30. I was disabled \_\_\_\_\_
31. Teachers thought I was dumb \_\_\_\_\_
32. I lived in a dangerous neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_

How many years was it since you dropped out of school? \_\_\_\_\_

I am returning to school because: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

After I complete my GED, I expect to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thanks so much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

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